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Poultry and Products

EP resolution calls for Council to reject EU Commission PRT proposal

2008

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Report Highlights:

On June 19, 2008 the European Parliament (EP) voted overwhelmingly in favor of a Resolution calling upon the European Council to reject a proposal from the European Commission (EC) to allow the use of PRTs on poultry. This vote came after a discussion on Tuesday June 17 between the EP with Commissioner for Food Safety and Public Health Vassiliou.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
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European Parliament adopts a non binding resolution against Pathogen Reduction Treatment (PRT) approval proposal of the European Commission for poultry meat presented by Commissioner Vassiliou.

Strasbourg June 19 - By way of the adoption of a Resolution (526 votes in favor, 27 against, 11 abstentions), the European Parliament (EP) has called upon the Council of Ministers to reject the Commission proposal on the authorization of chlorinated poultry imports into the EU. According to EP members (MEPs), the authorization of these antimicrobial treatments would undermine EU food safety standards, consumer confidence and the competitiveness of the EU's poultry industry, which has been required to invest heavily to comply with the EU's strict 'total food chain' approach. See the EP [press release](#)¹.

On Tuesday evening (June 17), European Commissioner for Food Safety and Public Health Mrs. Androulla Vassiliou led a discussion on a [resolution by the European Parliament](#)² against the authorization of Pathogen Reduction Treatments (PRT) on poultry. The agenda item was added to European Parliament meeting of Tuesday June 17, 2008. Vassiliou read a Commission statement to Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) on the Commission proposal meant to allow the use PRTs in the processing of poultry on EU and imported poultry. The Commissioner gave an outline of the proposal and explained the conditions it prescribes. Vassiliou told parliamentarians that the use of PRTs would not be allowed to replace hygienic practices throughout the production chain.

With regard to the decision-making procedure, Vassiliou said that after the rejection of the proposals by the Standing Committee of Food Chain and Animal Health on June 2, it was now up to the Council to decide. The Council could take up the proposal in July or September.

Sixteen out of seventeen MEPs argue against PRT approval during the June 17 discussion.

Of seventeen MEPs that took the floor following Vassiliou's statement, all but one opposed the Commission's proposals and urged the Commission to effectively withdraw the draft legislation. The parliamentarians said that by allowing chlorinated poultry imports, the EU would undermine its own, strict food safety regulations, consumer confidence would suffer, the EU poultry industry would be confronted with unfair competition and European jobs would be at stake. Many made the point that EU producers for years have had to invest heavily in order to meet the EU regulations and that therefore it would be unfair to allow products in from countries with less strict (and costly) regulations. A number of MEPs mentioned that a recent U.S. CDC report had shown that salmonella contaminations/zoonotic diseases were on the rise in the U.S., which would demonstrate that U.S. food safety regulations were not as effective as EU practices. Some speakers suggested that the Commission had clearly given in to strong pressure by the U.S. and that by doing so, was not respecting the precautionary principle.

Only German Christian-Democrat Daniel Caspary defended the Commission proposals. He said that chlorine was being used in all sorts of products in the EU, such as feedstuff, food products and drinking water. He questioned if this would be allowed if it were dangerous. He also mentioned that the use of these same methods by French poultry exporters. Caspary said "this is a dishonest discussion (...) We should not hide behind so-called environmental reasons (...) We have to bring honesty into the discussions with our

¹ http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/067-32121-168-06-25-911-20080618IPR32120-16-06-2008-2008-false/default_en.htm

² <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+MOTION+B6-2008-0309+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN>

American friends". Caspary did regret, however, that the Commission had also not been able to agree with the US Government on the lifting of its import restrictions against EU poultry. [The statements of Commissioner Vassiliou and the seventeen MEPs](#)³ can be consulted on the EP website.

Below is the list of MEPs who spoke. Most are members of the Agriculture Committee (AGRI) and the Environment/public health committee (ENVI). Four are member of the international trade committee (INTA). No members from the EP delegation of the [Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue](#) (TLD group) were present.

Robert Sturdy (EPP, UK) INTA/AGRI
Anne Ferreira (PES, F) ENVI
Bart Staes (Greens, B) ENVI
Janusz Wojciechowski (UEN, PL) AGRI
Konstantinos Droutsas (UEN, Greece) AGRI
Daniel Caspary (EPP, D) INTA
Francisco Assis (PES, P) INTA
Frederique Ries (ALDE, B) ENVI
Carl Schlyter (Greens, Sweden) ENVI
Zbigniew Krzysztof Kuzmiuk (UEN, PL)
Georgios Papastamkos (EPP, GR) INTA
Rosa Miguélez Ramos (PES, Spain) AGRI
Esther de Lange (EPP, NL) AGRI
Esther Herranz García (EPP, Spain) AGRI
Francoise Grossetete (EPP, F) ENVI
Czesław Adam Siekierski (EPP, PL) AGRI
Marios Matsakis (ALDE, Cyprus) ENVI

Six of the seven political groups of the European Parliament support the joint, non-binding Resolution, which calls upon the Commission to withdraw its PRT proposal. The vote is scheduled to take place on Thursday 19 June 2008.

³ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20080617+ITEM-014+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

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E48024	Poultry – semi-annual	03/12/08
E47050	EC Regulation sets targets for salmonella prevalence in broiler flocks	06/19/07
E47039	EU opens poultry TRQ for the United States	05/21/07
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